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Chairman: Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued)

Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) (A/49/7/Add.1 and A/C.5/49/41)

1. Mr. CONNOR (Under Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said that a status report on the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) showed that the project was basically on schedule. Release 1, which covered the human resources database, personnel actions, the account code structure, country tables and security access and control, had been operational since September 1993 at Headquarters. Release 2, which covered processing of staff entitlements, recruitment and applicant processing, had undergone system testing and was expected to be implemented during the first quarter of 1995. At the heart of the financial accounting system was release 3, covering expenditure controls; the problems encountered during the testing phase of release 3 were being addressed and its implementation was projected for the second half of 1995. The external design of release 4, covering payroll, would begin in January 1995, with implementation scheduled for October 1995 to run parallel with the existing payroll system. The objectives of the strategy outlined in the sixth progress report (A/C.5/48/12/Add.1), including strengthening the role of the Steering Committee and the Project Team, reviewing the scope of the project and revising the implementation schedule, had been met. The recruitment of temporary staff for implementation-related functions was 80 per cent complete and detailed surveys of the requirements of offices away from Headquarters, in particular Geneva, were under way. With regard to the reassessment of the resources required for implementation and initial maintenance of the system, initial estimates had been reviewed by the Board of Auditors and a study on long-term maintenance would be completed by the end of January 1995.

2. Since June 1994, the records of all Headquarters staff on payroll and their dependants had been entered in IMIS. The number of staff members in the system with expired appointments had been reduced from 1,515 at the end of July 1994 to 247 at the end of November 1994. Records of posts had also been updated, with a reduction in the number of expired posts from 870 at the end of May 1994 to 20 at the end of November 1994. The implementation of IMIS had forced the Organization to follow procedures which had been in place for some time but which had been ignored in the past. Policy issues concerning procedures for the management of staff assigned or recruited for field missions had been streamlined and clarified. Increased delegation of authority granted to executive officers had been made possible by the monitoring tools provided by IMIS. The system allowed daily monitoring of expiration of appointments, post and post incumbencies. The number of transactions conducted on the system was increasing gradually.

3. A number of recommendations had been made following the special audit of the project. The recommendation to amplify the implementation plan and appoint implementation teams was 80 per cent complete. Active monitoring of project activities by the Steering Committee and the surveys of offices away from Headquarters were ongoing and the standardization of procurement of personal

computers had been implemented as part of the surveys. An increase of $1.6 million had been recommended in the estimates; that figure would be included in the programme budget proposals for the biennium 1996-1997. Estimates would be reviewed after the completion of surveys at offices away from Headquarters, planned for April 1995. The feasibility of assigning United Nations staff to maintenance and implementation tasks was being explored as a component of the training for release 2, and a user review of release 3 was scheduled for the end of December 1994. Other recommendations included the provision of support for the development team, the use of task orders for out-of-scope activities rather than implementation activities, and planning for the phasing out of existing systems.

4. As for the requirements for 1995, there was no cushion in the budget, and unforeseen circumstances were likely to arise in a project of such complexity. The revised estimate for the period up to 31 December 1995 was $57,382,400, an increase of $7.3 million over the approved total budget. The Secretary-General had requested approval of the overall budget estimates contained in document A/C.5/48/12/Add.1, and authorization to proceed with the activities outlined and to incur expenditures up to the estimated amount for the biennium 1994-1995. Budget estimates for the current biennium would be reviewed at the fiftieth session in the light of actual expenditures and surveys at offices away from Headquarters.

5. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) drew attention to the second report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on IMIS (A/49/7/Add.1). The Advisory Committee had inquired into the effect of a delay in approval of resources for the project, and had concluded that a delay would be damaging to project implementation as envisaged in the plan. Accordingly, it recommended that the amount of $7.3 million should be approved as requested. However, since the entire amount would not be disbursed in 1995, it recommended that additional resources of $6,337,200 should be approved for the biennium 1994-1995, and that the Secretary-General should be authorized to enter into commitments in the amount of an additional $1 million to be committed but expended in 1996.

6. The cost of IMIS after 1996 would be reviewed by ACABQ in the context of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. The Committee noted the need to harmonize IMIS with the systems established for peace-keeping operations, and requested the Secretariat to identify possible savings resulting from the implementation of IMIS.

7. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee wished to endorse the recommendations of ACABQ regarding the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS).

8. It was so decided.

Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (A/49/7/Add.3 and A/C.5/49/25)

9. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the views of the Advisory Committee on procedures for review and approval of the budget of the International Seabed Authority were set out in document A/49/7/Add.3. The Advisory Committee recommended a net additional appropriation of $93,000.

10. Mr. KUZNETSOV (Russian Federation) said that the report of the Secretary-General regarding the establishment of the International Seabed Authority (A/C.5/49/25) did not clearly describe its programme of work and the basis for the resources requested. The budgetary requirements for its activities should actually decrease because of lower demand for conference services and reduced rental expenses for its premises. The report of the Secretary-General did not reflect the true level of expenditure required and dealt more with political agreements than financial needs. All expenditures relating to the establishment of the Authority must be carefully reviewed.

Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (A/49/7/Add.2 and A/C.5/49/29)

11. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, in the report of the Secretary-General on the Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) (A/C.5/49/29), the Secretary-General requested $12,725,100 under section 4 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. The initial amount of resources requested had been scaled down.

12. The question of the transfer of assets between missions was still to be settled in respect of MINUGUA. The Secretary-General had indicated that provision had been made for $2,655,500 for payments to other missions for the transfer of equipment and other assets to MINUGUA. The General Assembly had requested a report from the Secretariat before taking a final decision on the matter. The General Assembly would have to decide whether to include or delete the amount for the transferred assets; if it decided to delete it, then the sum of $10,690,600 would have to be appropriated. If the cost of the transferred assets was included, then the required appropriation would be $12,725,100.

AGENDA ITEM 117: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION (A/49/433 and Corr.1 and A/49/788)

13. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) (A/49/433 and Corr.1). By its resolution 966 (1994), the Security Council had extended the mandate of the Mission until 8 February 1995 and had recommended the restoration of troop strength to the previous level. The report had been prepared while the peace talks were ongoing and therefore covered only

the maintenance of the peace-keeping operation. The report of ACABQ also recommended the maintenance of the Mission at current levels.

14. Beyond the current mandate, the costs of the operation were estimated at $3.5 million per month. The General Assembly was requested to authorize expenditure for the maintenance of UNAVEM II past the expiration of its current mandate. The Mission was in a weak financial position, with $13.5 million in assessed contributions still outstanding.

15. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) drew attention to the report of the Advisory Committee (A/49/788), which contained recommendations covering the period from 1 June to 30 September 1994. The amount of $8,986,700 gross had been committed, as authorized under the terms of General Assembly resolution 48/421. For the period in question, the Secretary-General had requested assessment of an additional $591,900 gross. The Advisory Committee had deferred a decision pending consideration of the final performance report. The Security Council had extended the mandate of UNAVEM II and had authorized the restoration of its troop strength.

16. For the period from 1 October to 8 December 1994, the Advisory Committee had recommended appropriation and assessment of $4,112,400 gross. The Advisory Committee had also authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not to exceed $7,732,400 gross for the period from 9 December 1994 to 8 February 1995. The Advisory Committee had also authorized the Secretary-General to enter into an additional commitment of $2.2 million for the period up to 28 February 1995. Those two amounts were within the $10 million limit authorized for ACABQ by the General Assembly. That commitment would enable the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive report for review by the Advisory Committee at its winter session.

17. Ms. ALMAQ (New Zealand) expressed surprise that the Advisory Committee had been unable to review the Secretary-General's report on the financing of UNAVEM II (A/49/433 and Corr.1), which had been available since September 1994, particularly in view of the delicate stage of the Mission.

18. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the information relating to the mandate period from 1 June to 30 September 1994 was incomplete. He hoped that the review which the Advisory Committee proposed to carry out early in 1995 would be based on up-to-date information.

19. Mrs. EMERSON (Portugal) wondered whether enough resources would be available for the Mission to carry on its activities pending the review by the Advisory Committee of the report on the financing of UNAVEM II.

20. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the problem with UNAVEM II was not one of inadequate appropriations but rather one of the non-payment of contributions by Member States. Outstanding contributions currently amounted to approximately $13 million. The Advisory Committee had, in fact, approved an additional amount of $2.2 million over and above the amount requested by the Secretary-General.

21. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that only $200,000 was available in the Special Account for UNAVEM II. Approximately $13 million was outstanding from Member States and the Secretariat had resorted to borrowing from the Peace-keeping Reserve Fund and from the funds of completed missions. It was therefore essential for Member States to pay their outstanding assessed contributions and to make future payments in a timely manner.

AGENDA ITEM 116: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST (A/49/785 and Corr.1)

(a) UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE (A/49/553)

(b) UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON (A/49/644)

22. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the Secretary-General was of the view that the surplus balance in the Special Account of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) which was held in suspense could be reduced only under the following conditions: if substantial payment of arrears was made by Member States; if prompt and full payments were made by Member States of their assessed contributions in respect of future mandates approved by the Security Council; and if there was cash available after the operating expenses of UNDOF had been met.

23. With regard to the financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), (A/49/644), savings of $7.5 million had been effected as a result of reductions in average troop strength and the replacement of international civilian staff by local staff. He recalled that, in resolution 48/254, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to include in his next report to the General Assembly on the financing of UNDOF comments on the feasibility of a gradual reduction of the surplus balance, taking into account the financial situation of the Force, the status of reimbursement to troop-contributing countries and the views expressed by Member States. Given the substantial outstanding balance of assessed contributions, however, it would be difficult to recommend a reduction of the surplus balance.

24. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) noted that the financial situation of UNDOF was better than that of UNIFIL. The Advisory Committee therefore saw no need to enter the surplus balance of $9.1 million into the suspense account; that surplus should be instead credited to Member States. The Advisory Committee further recommended that the General Assembly should appropriate the amount of $16,080,000 gross ($15,594,000 net) authorized and assessed in accordance with paragraph 18 of General Assembly resolution 48/253 for the period from 1 June to 30 November 1994. Additionally, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should also appropriate an amount of $32,132,000 gross ($31,132,000 net) for the period from 1 December 1994 to 31 May 1995. For the period beyond 31 May 1995, should the Security Council renew the mandate of UNDOF, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments at a monthly rate not exceeding $2,677,583 gross ($2,594,000 net) per month for the maintenance of the Force.

25. With regard to UNIFIL, the Advisory Committee concurred in the Secretary-General's proposal in paragraph 25 (d) of his report (A/49/644) to enter the surplus balances of $5,780,416 covering the period from 1 February 1991 to 31 January 1992 and $12,198,044 for the period from 1 February 1992 to 31 January 1993 into the suspense account. As for the cost estimates for the period from 1 February 1995 to 31 January 1996, the Advisory Committee noted that the Secretary-General, in paragraph 25 (b) of his report, was seeking commitment authorization at a monthly rate of $11,234,500 gross from the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of that proposal, should the Security Council decide to renew the mandate of UNIFIL beyond 31 January 1996.

AGENDA ITEM 129: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN LIBERIA (A/49/571 and Add.1 and A/49/786)

26. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the Secretary-General's report (A/49/571) provided the cost estimates for the maintenance of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) for the period from 23 October 1994 to 22 April 1995, based on the reduced strength of the Mission as recommended by the Secretary-General. Largely because of the deteriorating political and security situation in the Mission area, there had been a significant gap between planned and actual deployment and a number of programmes had been suspended. As at 30 September 1994, total outstanding assessments of $5,752,600 were due from Member States, and it had been necessary to borrow from the Peace-keeping Reserve Fund in order to maintain the Mission.

27. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, based upon revised information received from representatives of the Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should appropriate $4,303,260 gross ($4,079,970 net) for the period from 23 October 1994 to 13 January 1995. With regard to the period after 13 January 1995, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should appropriate and assess the amount of $1,593,800 gross ($1,511,100 net) per month, subject to the decision to be taken by the Security Council on the renewal of UNOMIL.

AGENDA ITEM 146: FINANCING OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE PROSECUTION OF PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW COMMITTED IN THE TERRITORY OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA SINCE 1991 (A/49/790; A/C.5/49/11 and A/C.5/49/42)

28. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, given the importance of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991, the Advisory Committee needed more time to prepare an appropriate response to the report of the Secretary-General on its financing (A/C.5/49/42) and to the note of the Secretary-General on the conditions of service and allowances of its members (A/C.5/49/11). However, even if the Advisory Committee were able to submit a written report to the Fifth Committee before the end of December 1994, the Fifth Committee would hardly be able to discuss that report before the suspension of its current session. The Advisory

Committee therefore recommended that the General Assembly should approve an additional amount of $7 million to allow the International Tribunal to continue its activities through 31 March 1995. That additional funding, however, should be granted without prejudice to recommendations that the Committee might make to the General Assembly in February 1995 and the decisions that the General Assembly might take thereon with regard to the budgetary and administrative matters, including posts, concerning the Tribunal. In that connection, the Advisory Committee recommended that the authority to enter into contractual arrangements for staff for periods of up to one calendar year should be continued. In administering that authority, it should be borne in mind that the staffing table had not yet been approved.

29. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the item should be discussed further in informal consultations.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.